



The Rose Hawthorne Guild

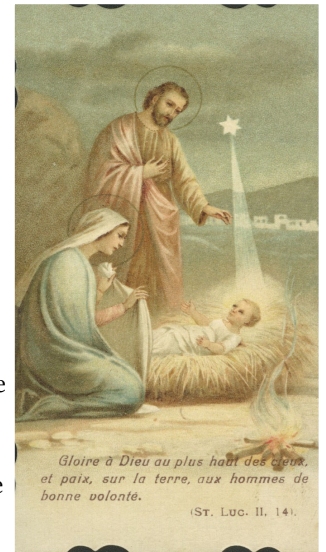
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“...learn from me, for I meek and humble of heart and you will find rest for yourselves.”

Matthew 11:29

Sometimes it is easier to say what humility is not than to give a simple definition of what it is. We know that humility is not a concert pianist saying they cannot play a note; it is not the inability to accept a compliment; it is not low self-esteem or insecurity. So what is humility? Why is it so important? Perhaps the simplest definition is that humility is acknowledging the truth about one's self – both the good and the bad. St. Catherine of Siena adds depth to this initial definition. St. Catherine teaches us about humility by emphasizing not only self-knowledge but also knowledge of God's love for us. St. Catherine teaches us that if one only has a true knowledge of one's self – our sinfulness, our nothingness in comparison to God, our frailty – we would quickly despair. And so, just as it is necessary to remain grounded in these truths, so too, we must have a deep knowledge of God's love for us. If we have no knowledge of ourselves but only of God's love, then we are tempted to presumption. So the truly humble person is the person most deeply rooted in the simultaneous truths of their own frailty and God's boundless love. In Rose Hawthorne's life, we know from her writings that she knew the necessity of humility. And we know from the witness of her life and service to the cancerous poor, that she consistently strove to grow in humility. In this issue of the Guild Newsletter we will catch glimpses of Mother Alphonsa's humility as she came face to face with her own weaknesses in working the sick poor and grew in her dependence on God. We will also share stories of favors people have received through Mother's intercession, remembering that any time we ask for the prayers of others – living or deceased – we are humbled before the goodness of God, and our need of His grace and the prayers of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Finally, we have some exciting news to share! May this Christmas season and New Year find us imitating the humility of the Christ child. We wish you all a Blessed Christmas season and Happy New Year!



Holy Card belonging to Mother
Mary Alphonsa

Guild Membership and Spiritual Benefits

Many Catholics are still unaware of Rose Hawthorne and her influence as a spiritual intercessor, mentor and friend. Because she was a convert, wife, mother and religious foundress, she serves as an example of Christian perfection and holiness to a wide range of people. As members of the Guild we should make her life and spiritual help known among family, friends and others who might benefit by her prayers and example. Please use the contact information on the back of the newsletter to direct others to the Guild, so that we can let more people know the good news of Mother Alphonsa's virtue, vision and mission. If you are interested in helping people to seek her intercession for their needs, there is also a form to request prayer cards, which have the prayer for canonization on them. Remember, there are spiritual benefits attached to Guild membership! Not only is there a monthly Mass celebrated for Guild members and their families, but during the seasons of Christmas and Easter members are remembered at a novena of Masses offered for their intentions. At other times, we will announce special novenas or Masses for the intentions of Guild members and their families. You are also joined in prayer to the Sisters whenever you pray the prayer for canonization.

“It is by humility and sacrifice alone that we become worthy to feel the holy spirit of pity...”

Mother Alphonsa’s humility is manifested in many ways in her letters and writings. Her humor: “He [a contractor] and I thoroughly understand now what is best and what I want for the Home, and of course I have come down from my high horse to a Shetland pony”; her vision for the way the community should serve the poor: “[Service to the poor] should be made so thorough and affectionately gentle that even the poor can



A patient's room at St. Rose's—meant to be welcoming and home-like

praise it”; her own identification with the poor: “[God] asks us to be humble and meek; to remember that we are dust; and as we prostrate ourselves to offer Him all that we are, we find the sick poor at our side...”; and her gratitude for the calling she had received: “Let us understand clearly, in the beginning of religious service, that there can be no question of pride or complacency, but only humble thanksgiving, abashed shamefulness, that we can do so little for the gift that will be given to us by God, who rushes His rewards upon us for the least loving act on our part...”

One of the most beautiful pieces of writing that gives a window into her humility is the account she gives of the first woman she nursed as her own guest – Mrs. Mary Watson. Rose Hawthorne met Mrs. Watson when she was taking her three-month cancer nursing course at New York Cancer Hospital. Mrs. Watson suffered from an advanced and disfiguring facial cancer. Despite this, Rose described her as “famous for her fun, with ingenuous methods of amusing the ward by her pranks...” and that “She did more than any of the other invalids both in the matter of usefulness and mischief.” After six months in the cancer ward, however, the doctors pronounced Mrs. Watson incurable and “... submitted to the fixed rule of hospitals in regard to such a situation. She had suddenly been sent away.” Within six weeks Rose Hawthorne heard from Mrs. Watson. Mrs. Watson asked her friend for a home to end her days. Rose was overjoyed and even grateful to take her in, and in her recounting of this moment, we see a glimpse of her humility. The joy from taking Mrs. Watson in and beginning her “life of usefulness” made her heart leap – a moment of embracing God’s love in her life by embracing His call to care for the cancerous poor. But she also had more self-knowledge looking back at her beginnings and wrote “It is fortunate that I knew so little as to what I was attempting, or how unreal joy is when we come to the heart of human concerns.” Looking back, she could see that she was over-confident, and that her ideas of what giving a home to another human being looked like were more idealistic than realistic. In these realizations there is great honesty and no attempt to sugar-coat anything for the reader.

Her efforts and life with Mrs. Watson started off well, living up to her ideal in many ways. When Rose told Mrs. Watson that she was welcome to make a home there with her, but also how poor she was, Mrs. Watson declared that they had always been “...good friends, and she said that she would gladly starve and freeze with me.” Rose began her life of service and Mrs. Watson helped around the house as best she could, despite Rose’s admonitions to not overdo herself. They even reversed roles at one point. When Rose came down with pneumonia because of her grueling hours and insufficient rest, Mrs. Watson nursed her back to health and prayed at her bedside. In her description of this touching scene, Rose betrays yet another element of her own humility – the willingness and ability to see the virtue and goodness of others and rejoice in it. She wrote, “How pleasing her motionless [praying] figure was in the sight of the Lord of Crucifixions... There was something holy about her peaceful hopefulness, and yet quiet resignation to the worst.... I neither doubted her worthiness to be loved, nor suspected my unworthiness of hers, as came about in sadder phases of time.”



Rose dressing the facial wound of Mrs. Watson

Sadly, times did change, and as Mrs. Watson became more settled in and as they lived around rougher sort of people, she became less grateful, more unreasonable, and less refined than she had been. Two daughters, heretofore never heard of, suddenly began to visit, in need of everything from money to clothing to

food. A grandson, who put the neighborhood boys to shame in his lying and pyromania, came and lived in the little tenement for a while, until Rose could not tolerate it anymore and sent him back to the protectory. The last straw seems to have been Mrs. Watson helping him acquire items for his mother which the well-dressed, well-fed daughter clearly did not need. For the readers of *Christ's Poor* there is little doubt she did the right thing because of the stories she shared, but her self-assessment was different. "Her [Mrs. Watson's] ungrateful purloining [for her daughter] made me angry in my heart of hearts, and stern in my manner to her, sometimes. She asked why I was no longer a saint, and I wept, and said I loved her and, and always should. But I had to send [him] off..." As Mrs. Watson's condition declined, she became kindly and foolish, or bitter and angry, by turns. Perhaps this is the greatest example of humility in this writing – Mother Alphonsa never tries to excuse her own lapses in patience or charity. She saw the opportunities she missed to show charity, to exhibit not just simple patience and kindness, but Christlike patience and kindness. She goes out of her way to excuse Mrs. Watson's behavior and even bluntly admits that "... I resented her having affectionate patience with her low, unfilial children...and her half insane complaints when we did our best. She perceived this...and I daily grieved over my want of magnanimity." Anyone reading this could easily excuse Mother's behavior, knowing that she was not cruel to Mrs. Watson but simply frustrated or cool in her manner, and say that she is being too hard on herself. But in fact, this is a beautiful moment of humility – to see the graces one has been given, to see Christ present in another imperfect human being, and to grieve over one's own lack of faith and charity in the face of what are, ultimately, minor grievances. And to see that it is not about failing to live up to one's own ideals, but about accepting the love and grace which God pours into our hearts. We are truly given the grace to accept and live the calls in our lives, but we live out these calls and cooperate with His grace from a place of poverty and weakness. In the end Mother wrote "As I sat by her simple black coffin...I had no thought for anything but the fact that I was a poor friend to the poor, and heartless judge of a kinder heart than my own, and darker failure in better light than the woman who had often prayed for me..." This, taken alone, could make one think that Mother saw only her failure and was demoralized. Had she failed at the mission God had given her? Time spent in the cell of self-knowledge can be extremely painful and clearly it was for Mother. But there is no despair in these stark, honest words, and her conclusion shows us that humility brought her low by her failures, but also raised her up in dependence on God. She ends her story with these words: "All one can conclude is that God may have special constitutional clauses of mercy for those who try to reach heaven by Alpine climbing and fall into a crevasse." She remains certain of her goal – heaven – and gives no indication that falling down means she will give up. As Christians, there is a way in which all our goals are too high for us. Our greatest hopes and desires are beyond any natural strength anyone has. We are constantly reaching beyond ourselves because our goal is holiness. But the Lord takes the initiative for all of us. His mercy, His grace, His life allows us to attempt things that would be impossible on our own. Humility allows us to rejoice in our weakness, our neediness and to rely on His never-failing mercy and grace - and to always get back up and keep climbing after one of our slips down the mountainside of charity.

NEXT TIME : In the next issue we will look at the process involved in the Church declaring someone a saint and what the next steps for Rose Hawthorne's cause will be. We are also eager to share some of our longer favor letters!



Sisters honor Our Lady - our exemplar of humility

Rose Hawthorne (Mother Mary Alphonsa) Pray for us!

"It is with a grateful heart that I write to you to tell you of the cure of my brother E and my nephew A. At the time, I did not have a prayer card of Mother Alphonsa. I just prayed and begged her to heal my brother and nephew. My brother's blood is cancer free. Also my nephew, after surgery is cancer free. I owe all of this to the

healing intercession of Mother Mary Alphonsa and again I am forever grateful." –Sr. M.G.T.

"...I wrote to you a couple of years ago asking for you to please keep me and my loved ones in your thoughts and prayers, and about receiving a relic. I want to thank you for allowing me to have Rose Hawthorne in my home and my

life. Since she has been in my life, my health (an autoimmune disease), has gone down from 85% to 10%...She has [also] not only helped me clear my psoriasis but has helped me to lose 104lbs, which to me is a real miracle. I hope that you will use this to send in hopes that she will become Saint Rose Hawthorne. –N.P.

Rose Hawthorne Guild
600 Linda Avenue
Hawthorne, NY 10532



Rose Hawthorne's Cause for Canonization moves forward!

We are very excited to share with you recent news regarding progress in Rose Hawthorne's cause for canonization. On December 6, 2022, there was a judgement made by the Theological Consultants in Rome after reviewing Mother's writings and life. We received news on December 9th from the postulator that her *positio* (the document which reviews her life and works) **"has been judged by the Theological Consultants of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints with 9 out of 9 positive regarding the heroicity of the Virtues."** This is a very big step and very exciting news!

We thank you all for your prayers and support to help us get here and ask you to join us in thanking God for this move forward, and to keep praying for the advancement of her cause. The next step is a judgement among the Dicastery Bishops and Cardinals and then to our Holy Father Pope Francis. If he approves her life as one of heroic virtue, then she will be declared Venerable Rose Hawthorne (Mother Mary Alphonsa).

May God bless you and let us continue to be united in prayer!

Mass Intentions-

Please remember these intentions your monthly Mass for members of the Rose Hawthorne Guild

Please support the Guild:

For a \$10 donation we will send one of the following gifts of your choice:

- Pink Acrylic beads Rose Hawthorne Rosary
- Brown Acrylic beads Rose Hawthorne Rosary
- Rose Hawthorne Guild Notecards—pack of 8 cards and envelopes

For a \$5 donation we will send one of the following gifts of your choice:

- Rose Hawthorne Guild post-it notes — 6 pads, 50 notes in each pad
- A booklet of Mother Mary Alphonsa's quotes from her letters and writings
- I would like to spread devotion to Mother Mary Alphonsa, please send me _____ prayer cards (no donation necessary, please specify number of cards)

Please send my prayer cards in Spanish

The prayer for the Canonization of Rose Hawthorne is also available on our website

The Guild Needs New Members!

Please contact us:

Phone (914) 769 0114 **Fax:** (914) 769 0827

Email: guild@hawthorne-dominicans.org

Website: www.hawthorne-

I would like to join the Guild! Please add the following name to receive information and material from the Guild:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____